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UNFPA INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: REVIEW OF EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTATION, 1997-2000

Report of the Executive Director

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In decision 97/13, the Executive Board endorsed the UNFPA information and communication strategy contained in document DP/FPA/1997/8 and requested the Executive Director to review that strategy in four years and to report thereon to the Executive Board at its annual session 2001. This report responds to that request. It examines the strategy and approaches set out in DP/FPA/1997/8 in light of the experience gained in implementing the strategy and of developments in the field of population and development in the intervening years, notably the ICPD+5 review that occurred in 1999.

2. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994, positioned UNFPA to take a leadership role in international advocacy on population and reproductive health issues. Following the ICPD, the UNFPA Executive Board decided that advocacy would be one of the Fund's three core programme areas and that the Fund's information and communication strategy would be a major element in turning the ICPD principles into reality at the national, regional and international levels. The critical role of information and communication strategy in the United Nations system was also reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 55/136 of 8 December 2000, when it concurred with the "view of the Secretary-General that public information and communications should be placed at the heart of the strategic management of the United Nations and that a culture of communication should permeate all levels of the Organization" (preambular para. 2).

3. The UNFPA information and communication strategy is part of the Fund's overall role in advocacy, which, in addition to being a core programme area, is a key strategy to advance the goals of the UNFPA multi-year funding framework (MYFF) (see document DP/FPA/2001/4/Part II, also being submitted to the Board at the annual session). Advocacy to achieve MYFF results is carried out at different levels: (a) programme advocacy, including support for a nationally driven agenda for policy dialogue and legal changes in health, education and population and development sectoral plans; and (b) global policy advocacy, which is driven by the need to maintain the momentum for the achievement of ICPD goals as well as to mobilize resources for population and reproductive health programmes and to highlight the role of UNFPA as a lead organization in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action.

4. The major finding of the review of the information and communication strategy is that the strategy has proven to be effective over the past four years in addressing many of the basic challenges facing UNFPA: ensuring sound and stable funding; increasing awareness and understanding of the role and relevance of population in the development process; building support for the activities of UNFPA; strengthening the organization's capacity for international policy advocacy; and working towards ICPD goals successfully within national social and cultural realities, including placing reproductive health and gender issues higher up on national

policy agendas. The strategy has also helped UNFPA to expand the outreach of its messages to key audiences (communications media, journalists, key decision makers, religious leaders, parliamentarians, donor Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the general public, among others), as well as to expand its partnerships with government and non-governmental organizations. Of course, there have been, and will continue to be, adjustments in the strategy to adapt to changing circumstances. During the past five years, the ICPD+5 process, in particular, identified key population and reproductive health issues that require increased attention such as adolescent reproductive health, maternal mortality, violence against women and HIV/AIDS.

II. REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY

5. The information and communication strategy adopted through decision 97/13 was clear-cut and straightforward. It is part of the Fund's overall role in advocacy, and consists of three pillars:

(a) The purpose of the Fund's information and communication efforts is to ensure that the principles and goals of the ICPD are universally understood and accepted and that those goals are translated into reality;

(b) The main focus of all UNFPA advocacy activities is at the national level; such activities are carried out by UNFPA country offices and are supported and complemented by global advocacy efforts;

(c) To the extent that financial resources allow, the Fund uses a wide variety of both traditional and innovative media to convey its messages to diverse audiences.

6. It is fundamental that all of UNFPA's messages are based on the concept that population issues should be fully integrated into development strategies, planning, decision-making and resource allocation at all levels and in all regions (para. 3.4(a) of the ICPD Programme of Action). Indeed, even though information and communication messages have international, regional and national dimensions, they are all designed to promote the global goals of the ICPD and ICPD+5.

7. As noted in the Fund's information and communication strategy, "advocacy activities in programme countries are developed and carried out at the national level, according to the priorities and with the agreement of national authorities. They form part of the national strategy for population and development. Activities at the international and regional level are developed and carried out by UNFPA headquarters in New York. Activities at the different levels are intended to reinforce and complement each other" (para. 9 of document DP/FPA/1997/8).

8. It should be emphasized that, as in the past, the vast bulk of UNFPA's advocacy takes place at the national level. The various products and activities at the global level support UNFPA's programmes in developing countries, including extensive national policy advocacy activities, and try to maximize their impact beyond national borders. This report concentrates on UNFPA's policy advocacy role at the global level while reiterating that global policy advocacy efforts are designed to support programme advocacy strategies at the country level.

9. The information and communication strategy adopted in 1997 seeks to strengthen national efforts to mobilize support among all sectors of society for national population and reproductive health programmes. National advocacy efforts are concerned with a wide spectrum of issues particular to each national situation. One very important aspect of national advocacy efforts throughout the world is to create an enabling legal and attitudinal environment that promotes the empowerment of women. This involves, among other things, changing laws to protect girls and women against violence and enabling women to make their own reproductive decisions. Other increasingly important areas are to establish environments conducive to the promotion of adolescent reproductive health and to the prevention of the spread of HIV. Part I of the Executive Director's annual report for 2000 (DP/FPA/2001/4/Part I) documents the broad range of advocacy efforts at the national level. This document will not duplicate that report's presentation of the rich array of national-level programmes and accomplishments. It is useful to note, however, that the national-level activities benefitted from materials and activities implemented under the information and communication strategy, and that global advocacy was much strengthened by examples of successful implementation at national level.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY SINCE 1997

10. The 1997 UNFPA communication strategy indicated that the Fund would work with the most appropriate combination of media to convey its messages. In the years since the adoption of the strategy, UNFPA staff have kept abreast of the latest developments in a rapidly changing media environment. New media tools, such as low-cost video, were developed for appropriate audiences. UNFPA also sharpened the focus of existing products, such as print publications, the web site, and the *State of World Population* report, and explored ways for different media, such as print and electronic publications, to work together and reinforce each other.

11. UNFPA employed both conventional and innovative means to reach its audiences. Traditionally effective publications such as the *State of World Population* report, *Population Issues Briefing Kit*, *POPULI* and *Dispatches* continue to form the solid core of information about UNFPA, the ICPD and population issues. Promotion of UNFPA's publications at national and international levels continued to elicit strong editorial support for the Fund and its goals from a broad spectrum of policymakers, NGOs and media.

12. In addition to traditional methods, the past four years have seen increasing use of innovative media and combinations of media. The Internet has been used for real-time reporting; personal appearances by UNFPA's Goodwill Ambassadors have been broadcast on television and featured on web-based live discussions; and low-cost video packages have been prepared for donors to illustrate the impact of their contributions.

13. The training of staff has been an indispensable tool in enhancing UNFPA's institutional capacity to present its message effectively, both at the country and at the international level. As part of this institution building, UNFPA has carried out an aggressive advocacy and media skills training programme for its staff in programme countries. In the last four years, the Fund has trained some 115 country office staff in techniques for promoting the ICPD agenda and the work of UNFPA. As a result of these programmes, many staff have become highly professional in advocacy with policymakers, opinion leaders and the media in the countries in which they work.

14. To assess the impact of the Fund's international advocacy efforts, NGO partners were enlisted to provide support, analysis and feedback of media coverage and other results. Opinion polling, to the extent possible given UNFPA's limited resources, has provided further indications. One of the best indicators of the success of the Fund's communication strategy has been the increase in extrabudgetary funding for specific activities, such as the Gates Foundation grant of $57 million for HIV/AIDS activities in four countries in Africa, and the commitment of the Governments of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Canada for the supply of reproductive health commodities.

Periodicals

15. UNFPA continues to publish the quarterly magazine *POPULI* and the newsletter *Dispatches*. Since 1997, 42 editions of *POPULI* and 108 of *Dispatches* were issued in English, French and Spanish and sent to country offices in developing countries and to subscribers in developed countries. The circulation of *POPULI* (English, French and Spanish), which is based on requests from subscribers, rose from 17,000 to 20,000. The English edition alone rose 20 per cent, from 10,000 to 12,000. A survey in 1995 showed that about one half of respondents shared their magazines with about five others, while another 20 per cent shared them with 10 or more people.

16. In the Internet age, paper copies of these publications are still essential since the vast majority of the people that UNFPA seeks to reach at the national level do not have easy access to computers and phone lines. Print publications are essential if UNFPA is to chronicle at the global and national levels its concrete activities and achievements in the field and to make them available to all.

17. In early 1998, the cover format of *POPULI* was changed to make it more eye-catching and, therefore, more inviting to readers. The magazine has also become more theme-oriented to provide more in-depth understanding of population and related matters. The posting of *POPULI* and *Dispatches* on the UNFPA web site has given these masthead publications a global reach at little additional cost. Feedback from readers has been encouraging. It has come in the form of letters, mostly from the developing countries, as well as requests for extra copies and e-mails from NGOs working in the field of population.

State of World Population report

18. First published in 1978, the *State of World Population* report has grown in substance, outreach, and acceptability. An editorial and production unit established in 1995 to oversee its publication has significantly improved its quality, packaging, presentation and shelf life. At the same time, great efforts have been made at the national level to feature this publication at high-profile events and news conferences to promote the Fund and ICPD. The *State of World Population* report continues to attract international print and television coverage. The 2000 report on gender inequality, for example, was the day's lead story on the CNN.com web site and was among the top stories on many other influential news sites.

Advocacy publications

19. During the past four years, UNFPA has published more than a dozen substantive, colourful, and well-designed booklets dealing with a broad scope of topics central to the mission of UNFPA and the ICPD Programme of Action. These advocacy brochures have been published in English, French, Spanish and, recently, in Arabic. The brochures have dealt with such topics as enlisting men in HIV/AIDS prevention, empowering women, addressing violence against girls and women, ensuring adolescent reproductive health, promoting reproductive rights, mobilizing resources to implement the ICPD, closing the gap between women's aspirations and their reproductive experiences, linking population with food security and with the environment, and illustrating case studies of UNFPA's work. By posting these publications on the web site, often in several languages and in downloadable PDF format, UNFPA has made them available to a large number of people. Country offices have found the advocacy publications to be especially useful in the work in promoting the ICPD goals. These and other publications, including a set of briefing notes on UNFPA positions, help guide and strengthen country office advocacy activities.

ICPD+5 and the Hague Forum

20. The ICPD+5 review process in 1998 and 1999 gave UNFPA an opportunity to focus media attention on reproductive health and other issues central to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. UNFPA provided real-time web press releases and photos on each of the global round tables that took place as part of the ICPD review. At the 1999 Hague Forum,

during an unofficial intergovernmental discussion on ICPD implementation, a media team provided background briefings for journalists and background television footage, and arranged press conferences and interviews with key participants.

21. As a result of such activities, The Hague Forum was covered extensively by media organizations from throughout the world. Major daily newspapers in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland reported daily and positively on the meeting. The European media stories were especially supportive of UNFPA and the need for increased funding. The most extensive coverage of The Hague Forum was done in France, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. The main topics covered in the press were population funding, women's rights to family planning and education, the 6 billion-population issue, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

World Population Day

22. An excellent example of how advocacy at the international level feeds into and supports national programmes is World Population Day. World Population Day is widely accepted and promoted by Governments and NGOs in almost all programme countries, with considerable impact on commitment for ICPD goals. The occasion is often used by Governments and national NGOs to bring issues of particular national relevance to the attention of the general public. The associated poster contest has proven to be a very popular way of raising awareness of population and reproductive health issues among school children.

Day of Six Billion

23. World Population Day, 11 July 1999, marked the start of the "count-up" to the Day of Six Billion on 12 October. The intervening period saw an outpouring of materials and activities in both programme and donor countries which employed the "event" of passing the six billion mark as a vehicle to carry the messages of ICPD – especially reproductive health, women's empowerment and gender equality. UNFPA strategically launched the 1999 *State of World Population* report, *"6 Billion: a Time for Choices"*, two weeks before the Day of Six Billion.

24. The news that global population had reached six billion and accompanying coverage of ICPD themes generated more than 750 articles, editorials, opinion pieces, and television and radio stories in the United States and Europe in the first two weeks of October 1999. More than 150 radio talk shows throughout the United States focused on world population issues during this time, allowing their listeners to call in to talk with various population experts. National-level efforts in programme countries amplified the messages of the Day of Six Billion and strengthened advocacy for ICPD goals. CNN and CNN International carried the "Moment of 6 Billion" live from the visitor's lobby at United Nations headquarters, filming a countdown clock produced by UNFPA for the occasion.

25. At the international level, UNFPA devoted considerable space on its web site to the Day of Six Billion and provided links to many other resources on the web. UNFPA designed a special logo for the day, and produced a television spot, poster and other materials featuring the logo. Following the release of the *State of World Population* report, many newspapers noted the shortfall in financing to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. In editorial comment, many of them urged expanded and restored funding by major donors.

Goodwill Ambassadors

26. Since 1997, the Fund has made a major effort to expand the *Face to Face* campaign, a UNFPA-initiated, independent campaign promoting partnership among European NGOs and the use of Goodwill Ambassadors. For example, Geri Halliwell of the United Kingdom travelled to the Philippines in 1999, where one week later the Government announced a change in its policy on contraception and services for youth. Mikko Kuustonen of Finland produced a documentary on lives of women around the world that featured Waris Dirie of Somalia, UNFPA's Goodwill Ambassador on female genital cutting, and Shabana Azmi of India. Goodwill Ambassador Nicolaas Biegman of the Netherlands (co-chair of ICPD and an expert photographer) went to Haiti to shoot the pictures for an impressive photo documentation for the book *Men Nan Men*, a look at the human side of population and development themes in Haiti. Mpule Kwelagobe of Botswana and Waris Dirie visited the United States Congress and generated support for funding of UNFPA programmes.

27. Goodwill Ambassadors from Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic teamed up with Waris Dirie at the General Assembly Special Session on ICPD+5 in New York and met with Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In 2000, the Fund introduced a new Goodwill Ambassador, Bertrand Piccard of Switzerland, who landed a balloon at United Nations headquarters in Geneva to mark the millennium and to launch a special event held there in June with Goodwill Ambassadors from all over the world. The UNFPA ambassadors were also well represented at the October 2000 Conference of Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace at the United Nations in New York.

28. The *Face to Face* campaign has been so successful that it was institutionalized in 1999 as a non-profit NGO. Its partners produced 13 television documentaries with ICPD themes, four travelling exhibitions, an award winning poster campaign, a national school essay contest, an international photo contest, six advertising campaigns and numerous magazine and press articles.

29. In all there are 32 UNFPA Goodwill Ambassadors. In addition to the ones mentioned above, they are: Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Keiko Kishi (Japan), Catarina Furtado (Portugal), Alfred Biolek (Germany), Linda Gray (United States), Mary Banotti (Ireland), Safia El-Emary (Egypt), Goedele Liekens (Belgium), Jamal Soliman (Syrian Arab Republic), Kattis Ahlstrom

(Sweden), Feryal Ali Gauhar (Pakistan), Bui Nakhirunkanok (Thailand), Manisha Koirala (India), Elsa Zylberstein (France), Xavier Sarda (Spain), Hanne-Vibeke Holst (Denmark), Magenta Devine (United Kingdom), Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck (Bhutan), Lupita Jones (Mexico), Rosy Senanayake (Sri Lanka), Mona Grudt (Norway), Kari Jaquesson (Norway), Chea Samang (Cambodia), Alexander Sanger (USA) and Lara Dutta (India).

UNFPA web site

30. In the past four years the Internet has become a truly global medium and an important instrument in implementing UNFPA's information and communication strategy. UNFPA took an incremental and cost-conscious approach to developing its web site over the past several years, making it user friendly and introducing new features only as they became accessible to a greater number of Internet users. The Fund will continue to take the same balanced approach as in the past, innovating with due concern for accessibility and cost.

31. The UNFPA web site has been acclaimed as among the best in the population field, providing easy-to-find, clearly presented and timely information on a wide range of topics. The quality of information on the site has attracted many viewers to it. For example, in September 2000, there were 1.5 million hits by 107,000 users who downloaded 14.3 million kilobytes of information.

32. Both the content and traffic on the Fund's web site have grown steadily since 1997. UNFPA has put online nearly all of its own publications – including *The State of World Population* reports, the advocacy series, the *Annual Report*, *POPULI* and *Dispatches*. The Internet was used to cover the full ICPD+5 process extensively, combining real-time reporting on meetings with links to documentation – a first for the United Nations.

33. Fact sheets and interactive features have been created to introduce the public to population issues, as was done for the "Day of Six Billion" in 1999. More recently, news features about the Fund's work in the field have been added. The UNFPA web site has enabled the organization to publicize the *State of World Population* report more effectively and to expand its audiences with minimal additional costs.

34. UNFPA has made available on its web site a growing volume of information on its work. These include statements of the Executive Director, technical publications, procurement materials and background information on programmes in the Asia and Pacific region. UNFPA has worked to ensure design and editorial consistency for the materials on the web site and has provided guidance to staff on presenting information effectively to the public. UNFPA is working to create web pages for each division at headquarters, and the web supervisors have worked with country offices to help them develop their own web pages and content.

35. An independent audit of population-related Internet sites, conducted in 1999 by the Packard Foundation, found the UNFPA web site to be "an excellent site, one of the very best" providing "detailed information suitable for policy makers, media and industry" and "well organized so that the general public may also find useful information". The site was one of several rated "of very high quality based on the quality of the content (accuracy, detail, clarity, appropriate to audience) and presentation of content (ease of access, presentation appropriate to target audience, use of visual images or charts)".

36. While it has been highly desirable to translate the web content into multiple languages, financial and staffing constraints have prevented this. However, efforts continue to ensure that all publications are available on the UNFPA web site in all languages in which they were printed.

37. As part of a strategy to close the gap in the digital divide and connectivity issues in developing countries, UNFPA developed in 1998 and 1999 a CD-ROM featuring all content available on UNFPA's web site. Virtual exhibits such as the AIDS clock and the Day of Six Billion have also been included. The CD-ROM also contains directories and resources for population activities from the Population Information Network (POPIN), including a comprehensive overview of demographic software available on the World Wide Web. A complete overview of the PopMap Software, including examples and training modules, is also featured.

Video productions and broadband outreach

38. UNFPA employed innovative technologies and new media techniques to promote the ICPD message to a broad range of audiences. It enhanced its production and distribution of supportive visual materials using the latest in distribution technologies and video production. In each of the years 1999 and 2000, the Fund supported the production of an independent one-hour investigative video addressing the major themes of the *State of World Population* report in three programme and donor countries. The documentaries were widely distributed in programme countries and through syndications in donor countries; 150 public television stations in the United States and more than a dozen national stations in Europe showed the two videos. The documentaries were also shown on national television networks in almost all programme countries.

39. Video news releases (VNRs) reach international television news media worldwide. They promote population issues and the work of the Fund by giving visuals to media outlets to use in their reporting at no cost. Three VNRs have been produced each year in the last few years. They included interviews with leaders, population specialists and those affected by UNFPA programmes. They have been distributed by satellite by Reuters, the Associated Press, the European Broadcast Union, BBC World, and CNN International.

40. Public service announcements (PSAs) are particularly useful in a crowded television environment to allow at least 30 seconds of time for the work of the Fund. UNFPA has produced PSAs that feature high-profile celebrities to ensure their use by syndications and national television stations. In a recent PSA that received widespread circulation, India's Lara Dutta, Miss Universe and a UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador, made a very effective appearance in support of earthquake victims in her native country, where the Fund supplied emergency reproductive health supplies.

41. Award-winning exhibits have advertised the Fund's strategic message and mission at international conferences and special meetings. The customized exhibits and display systems use graphic panels incorporating new technologies, CD-ROM, electronic systems, video screens and interactive modules. Many of the exhibits were featured in professional design reviews and magazines and have received several important industry awards.

42. Other visuals, such as posters, were produced for World Population Day and for the annual poster competition. Without exception they provided much publicity at the national level for the work of UNFPA and the ICPD Programme of Action.

43. To assist in the institutional promotion of UNFPA, for the last five years, UNFPA has produced – in-house – a video in English, French and Spanish about UNFPA's work and distributed it to, among others, country offices, United Nations libraries, diplomatic missions, NGOs and donors.

Visits by journalists

44. UNFPA has found that facilitating journalists' visits to UNFPA projects in the field is very cost effective. The resulting independent coverage in major print and electronic media has credibility beyond the reach of advertising. Over the past four years, 68 journalists have visited programme countries. Their reports have given population and development a human face. In all, 34 journalists from UNFPA's major donor countries and 34 from developing countries participated in these nine country field trips; most of these visits were sponsored by a grant from the United Nations Foundation. Of the 34 participants from donor countries, 21 were women. UNFPA also invited 30 journalists – from Africa, Arab States, Latin America and Asia – to The Hague Media Seminar, held in February 1999 as part of the ICPD+5 activities.

45. Participating journalists from donor countries produced 15 radio programmes and published 14 magazine articles and 21 newspaper reports. Included among these were three opinion pieces in leading newspapers in the United States (*The Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe* and *St. Louis Post Dispatch*) urging funding for UNFPA. Three television feature programmes were produced on Mongolia, Nicaragua and the United Republic of Tanzania. The

Reuters television crew that went to the United Republic of Tanzania serviced 100 television stations around the world. Reports from Reuters television and the BBC covered the story of Congolese women living in Tanzanian refugee camps, at a time when world media were neglecting the situation of displaced persons in Africa.

IV. THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

46. The review of the information and communication strategy has revealed two seemingly contradictory trends. On the one hand, the strategy has helped raise the profile and strengthen the international consensus in support of the ICPD Programme of Action and the work of UNFPA. On the other hand, this higher profile and strengthened consensus have heightened the opposition to UNFPA and certain aspects of the Programme of Action and created in some quarters a false sense that population and development activities may no longer require high priority. The challenge for UNFPA's information and communication strategy in the near future therefore is: (a) to continue and deepen the process of consensus-building; (b) counter unprincipled opposition while responding to legitimate concerns; and (c) pay close attention to institutional positioning and promotion, especially among key donors, in order to meet ICPD financial goals. Achieving this will require a three-pronged approach: intensifying proactive communications; enhancing the identity and image of UNFPA; and addressing staffing and financial constraints.

Intensifying proactive communications

47. UNFPA will intensify its communications efforts in the coming years in order to increase its outreach to various media and their key decision makers such as selected editorial boards. It will also enhance its cooperation with NGOs and its own vigilance in monitoring media reporting on Fund concerns, especially negative reports. UNFPA plans to institutionalise such monitoring as a weekly exercise, increasing it to a daily exercise in times of crisis. This will enable the Fund to reinforce positive reportage and to spot and react quickly to negative and erroneous reports. Such media review and prompt response is an expensive and labour-intensive exercise, but an indispensable one in any media age, especially today's media with its rapid news cycle and short attention span. It will also afford UNFPA one of the few reliable (though indirect) ways of assessing the impact of the Fund's information and communication strategy.

48. NGOs have been key to the success of UNFPA's information and communication activities, having recently played an important role in the Fund's Goodwill Ambassador programme. UNFPA will increase its support to such organizations so that they can be partners in the Fund's new marketing efforts to raise UNFPA's profile and mobilize financial resources for the ICPD agenda and the work of UNFPA.

49. The Fund will also make greater use of its web site to generate support for UNFPA. It will expand its web coverage of UNFPA activities at the country level in all regions and in as many countries as possible. It will also publish such spin-offs as a book and CD-ROM of one-page profiles for every programme country. The profiles will highlight human-interest stories and programme successes that communicate the goals of the organization.

50. Responding to attacks and criticisms. The success of the ICPD process has brought population-related issues, especially reproductive health and gender questions, considerably higher up on national policy agendas. UNFPA's information and communication strategy has enhanced the impact of this process, but that accomplishment has also had negative side effects. This higher profile of both UNFPA and the ICPD have made them the target of attacks by various interest groups through the media and the legislatures of several countries.

51. While discussion and constructive criticism can advance the ICPD agenda, many of the recent attacks have been aimed at the ICPD consensus itself. Over the last four years, UNFPA has encountered libellous attacks by these groups, which at times flood the media and government offices with erroneous reports and blatant fabrications. In the present media environment, a negative story released on a web site or false press releases faxed to United Nation missions misrepresenting UNFPA policy require instant reaction to prevent misunderstanding and possible political damage.

52. Combating negative stories and presenting accurate information has absorbed significant time and even distracted attention from proactive advocacy. The experience of the ICPD+5 process has shown that accurate and objective information about population and development are the most effective ways to counter opposition and that opposition groups will exploit mistaken ideas and false perceptions to undermine the ICPD consensus as well as the work of UNFPA.

53. As a result of the ICPD process, there is broad consensus on population activities, which in turn have become progressively less sensitive. The effect of this success, however, has been to create in some quarters a false sense that population and development problems no longer require high priority. This has been detrimental for UNFPA, which ironically had an important role in creating the consensus. In the current highly entrepreneurial and competitive environment for a limited amount of international development assistance, UNFPA has to compete for resources with a number of other worthy organizations. It therefore must take steps to promote and market itself more aggressively.

Enhancing the identity and image of UNFPA

54. UNFPA plans to undertake an assessment of its current identity as perceived by donors, including its image, mandate, and goals. Two surveys of public opinion have been carried out in Europe with NGO assistance, and they have provided excellent information on what people and

Governments think about population activities. Support for population programmes was high in order of priority, but UNFPA rated low in recognition when compared to other United Nations agencies and NGOs.

55. As resources permit, a similar in-depth poll and survey will be taken among leaders, key donor government officials, and leading private-sector advocates to see how they perceive the work and effectiveness of UNFPA. The results of this process will provide the building blocks for a more targeted advocacy effort among donor Governments. It will also produce important data about what UNFPA should do to enhance its image globally. In existence for 31 years, UNFPA now needs to review its corporate identity and adopt a strategy to create a new and higher profile for UNFPA, consistent with its mandate and within the context of United Nations policy and guided by current legislation, *inter alia*, regarding the use of acronyms and logos.

56. UNFPA does not have a product to sell: its appeal lies in its vision of reaching out to individuals, especially women, and helping them in specific ways that will make a profound difference to their lives, and in so doing improve their reproductive health and promote the early stabilization of world population. The Fund also promotes itself as one of the most effective channels for funnelling assistance for such purposes. But UNFPA must compete among audiences bombarded with information, advertising and advocacy for a wide variety of causes, as well as with commercial advertising and marketing. Commercial products have vast advertising budgets. NGO and cause-related marketing is now well funded. With its very limited resources, UNFPA will have to be very nimble to succeed in such a competitive environment. If UNFPA does not compete, however, it will not attract the resources needed to carry out its activities and to fulfil its role as the lead agency in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

57. The review of the UNFPA information and communication strategy has shown that the UNFPA programme already employs many of these marketing devices. National advocacy activities promote ICPD messages and UNFPA's image by giving away pens and T-shirts, organizing poster contests and exhibits, and participating in trade shows. Moreover, many country offices have orchestrated intense and consistent public and media relations efforts.

58. The review has also pointed out the need for UNFPA to sharpen its resource mobilization strategy and to tie it more closely to the marketing efforts described above. For resource mobilization, there is a limited audience that must receive this message: those Governments and NGOs, foundations and the private sector that embrace the ICPD agenda and UNFPA vision and have the financial resources to contribute. Therefore, while UNFPA continues, and expands, its proven methods to bring the issues of population and development to a broad audience, it will give increasing attention to audiences that can, and will, deliver financial resources, and design a communication strategy to reach them.

Addressing financial and staffing constraints

59. A major constraint faced by UNFPA is the shortage of staff and financial resources to expand communication and information activities. When core funding started to shrink in 1997, UNFPA drastically reduced its international policy advocacy activities in order to maintain the flow of resources to its programme. However, effective policy advocacy at the international level depends on adequate resources to present programme successes, priorities and needs for the future. Only through effective advocacy can the UNFPA programme generate funding on the scale needed for future programme efforts. If instruments such as publications, partnerships with NGOs, parliamentarians and government bodies, the electronic media, advocacy training programmes and research and media consultations are reduced or eliminated, the Fund's advocacy cannot but be less effective. In general, the shortage of resources will limit UNFPA's ability to make the most synergies, for example, between publications, video and the Internet. It will also curtail UNFPA's ability to maximize the effects of the Fund's work with NGOs and other partners.

60. Annual donor support for population and reproductive health programmes is less than half the ICPD resource mobilization target for 2000. Even though UNFPA is acknowledged as a leader in this field and has a fairly high public profile, UNFPA's core funding target for 2000 was not reached. This illustrates the critical need to link advocacy efforts and resource mobilization more closely.

61. The UNFPA global media strategy will become more tightly focused on those governments and support groups that provide the political and financial support needed by the Fund. UNFPA will work to build public support for population and reproductive health programmes in donor countries. A recent example of this strategy in operation was the visit to a major European donor by high UNFPA officials in cooperation with the Development Ministry that resulted in a joint press conference and significant media interviews that built support for UNFPA and for increased funding for ICPD goals.

62. UNFPA country offices are a vital link in the chain of communications from country-level to global activities, but most do not have communications specialists on staff. This makes advocacy training all the more important for existing staff. UNFPA proposes closer attention to staffing needs of country offices in this regard. At the same time, country offices will be encouraged to make maximum use of existing resources by, for example, joining with NGOs and other partners in advocacy activities.

63. The key to the success of UNFPA's advocacy is that *every* staff member is an advocate for the ICPD and UNFPA and is conscious of the daily need for his or her personal commitment to advocacy. The Fund has achieved good results with media and advocacy training for country

office and headquarters staff, and these programmes need to be expanded to include all staff. With its limited staff resources, UNFPA will develop advocacy-training modules based on the training offered in the past, but expand that training and sharpen its focus on the new requirements for active resource mobilization and policy prioritization.

V. RECOMMENDATION

64. The Executive Board may wish to:

(a) Take note of the review of the UNFPA information and communication strategy contained in document DP/FPA/2001/6.

(b) Endorse actions taken by UNFPA to strengthen its ability to carry out the information and communication strategy endorsed by the Executive Board in decision 97/13;

(c) Urge UNFPA to continue to build on its past experience and to continue to develop innovative ways of implementing the Fund's information and communication strategy;

(d) Urge the international community to increase its financial support for the promotion of the goals of the ICPD and ICPD+5.

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